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## Conyers Criticizes FBI Raid of Congressional Office

Representative John Conyers, Jr., the Ranking Democrat on the House Judiciary Committee, issued the following statement on the constitutional issues raised by the search of the congressional offices of Representative William Jefferson by agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI):

"The Department of Justice has a critical role to play in ferreting out corruption at the highest levels of government. Through our oversight role, the Judiciary Committee has sought to ensure that federal law enforcement agencies have the tools necessary to protect the public interest in a manner consistent with both the letter and intent of the Constitution.

"While no one condones the kind of wrongdoing alleged by the FBI, I believe that the Justice Department has crossed a constitutional line in searching congressional offices without prior consultation or coordination with the legislative branch. With respect to the Speech and Debate Clause privilege of the Constitution, Art. I, Sect. 6, Cl. 1, the search of the offices of Representative Jefferson are clearly without precedent in the 219 year history of this republic. On its face, the search warrant does not justify the need for the search of congressional offices, and I am skeptical that the special procedures outlined in the warrant would pass constitutional review."

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